



**CITY OF PORTLAND**  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE  
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May 6, 2019

Water Bureau Customer  
\*\*\*\* NE 24th Ave  
Portland OR 97211

Claim Number: 2019-00\*\*\*\*-20  
Incident Date: March 16, 2019  
Location: \*\*\*\* NE 24th Ave

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for taking the time to submit your tort claim notice regarding the damage to your property on March 16, 2019. On behalf of the City of Portland, I regret to inform you that we are denying your claim. We understand that what you experienced was very difficult and we take claims such as yours very seriously. Every claim is investigated before finalizing our decision.

Our investigation revealed that the damage to your property was the result of a spontaneous water main break in a 30-inch transmission line, which moves large volumes of water from and between various water storage facilities on the east side of the Willamette River. The pipe segment that broke had no prior documented maintenance issues and the remainder of the main was found to be in good condition. The main break was not caused by any negligent actions by the City or its employees.

This transmission line's flow and pressure is continuously monitored and observed at the Water Bureau's Control Center. Because of this monitoring, emergency crews were on site within 30 minutes of multiple alarms being triggered at the Control Center. Teams of workers were dispatched to operate twelve separate large valves between NE 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Skidmore and NE 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Holladay. Reducing flow in a large transmission line is a complex effort, very different than a shutoff of a smaller service main. Each of the twelve valves required crews to perform hundreds of turns in a specific sequence. A controlled slowing of the water flow took approximately three hours, at which point repair operations could commence. The emergency response actions for this main break were reasonable and appropriate, especially in light of the magnitude of the event.

There were no additional risk factors for this particular main, as it is located on a residential street not impacted by public transit or heavy traffic; nor is it near any recent major construction projects. Despite the City's constant efforts at monitoring the water supply system for leaks or problem pipes, sometimes they still break. In fact, the Water Bureau responds to approximately 200 main breaks each year. The bureau has a robust active asset management program to identify for replacement water mains with a history of leaks, and to prioritize those with the highest risk of failure. Age of the pipe is only one of many factors considered.

Unfortunately, there are times when unforeseen events occur that can cause property damage. We understand the frustration this can cause for a property owner. Although the damage of property is

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certainly unfortunate, we conclude that the City is not liable for that damage.

If you have any questions about this, or additional information that you would like me to consider, feel free to email me at \*\*\*\*d@portlandoregon.gov or call me at 503-823-\*\*\*\*.

Sincerely,  
Risk Management

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Senior Claims Analyst